

Fans Who Buy Tickets Online Get Slammed: Buy a \$5 Yankee Ticket; Pay a \$9.40 Online Fee



by
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Introduction

Major League Baseball teams have tacked on order processing fees, convenience fees and printing fees for fans who want to buy online. These fees are arbitrary, excessive and can sometimes be greater than the face value of the ticket a fan is purchasing.

This report analyzed ticket fees from all 30 Major League Baseball teams and found that fees were high and inconsistent. Fans purchasing the cheapest tickets often pay the most in fees as a percentage of ticket prices. Families are especially hard hit with per ticket fees that add up quickly when taking the kids to the ballpark. Sadly, the New York teams are among the worst in the league.

To add greater transparency to baseball ticket fees, Rep. Weiner plans on introducing legislation requiring all websites selling baseball tickets to display the total amount of fees as a percent of the ticket price.

While it's unclear from ticket websites who benefits from each of the fees, the Major League Baseball, the teams, and the ticket vendors profit from the online fees. Printing fees in particular go to the online ticket vendors.

Study Highlights

- Fans buying a \$5 Yankee ticket can pay up to \$9.40 in fees, which is a 188% markup from the ticket price. The fees include: a \$3.30 order processing fee, a \$3.60 convenience fee, and a \$2.50 printing fee.
- Fans buying an \$11 Mets ticket can pay up to \$11.50 in fees, which is a 105% markup from the ticket price. The fees include: a \$5 order processing fee, a \$4 convenience fee, and a \$2.50 printing fee.
- Fans buying a \$4 Rockies ticket can pay up to \$8 in fees, which is a 200% markup from the ticket price. The fees include: a \$5 order processing fee, a \$4 convenience fee, and a \$2.50 printing fee.
- A family of four buying \$21 Mets tickets can pay up to \$31.50 in fees, which is a 38% markup from price of the tickets. The fees include: a \$5 order processing fee, \$24 in convenience fees, and a \$2.50 printing fee.
- Possibly the most outrageous fee is a printing fee, which can be as high as \$2.50 for just hitting the print button for your tickets.

Baseball Fans Pay Many Different Fees for Buying Tickets Online

Fans buying tickets online pay a series of fees on top of the price of their ticket(s). These fees include printing fees, order processing fees, and convenience fees. The only way to avoid all of these fees is to purchase your tickets at the stadium. Below is a description of each of these fees.

Highlights

- Order processing fees can be as low as \$1.75 for the Rangers or as high as \$7.00 for the Red Sox.
- Printing fees range from \$1.75 for Cardinals, Nationals and Pirates to \$2.50 for the majority of MLB teams.
- Convenience fees can be as low as \$1 for a \$5 Twins ticket or as high as \$26.50 for a \$150 Giants ticket.

Printing Fees

When fans buy tickets online, they have a couple of delivery options for receiving their tickets—one of which is printing their tickets at home. Every team in baseball (except for the Reds), gives their fans this option, but the teams charge an additional fee for doing so. These fees can vary from as low as \$1.75 to as high as \$2.50 (including the Mets and Yankees).

Order Processing Fees

When fans purchase tickets online, most teams charge order processing fees that cover the cost of processing each ticket order. This fee is a flat per order fee and does not change with the following: the ticket price, the number of tickets purchased, or the day of the game. The Blue Jays and the Brewers are the only two teams not to charge this fee. The Red Sox charge the highest online order processing fee at \$7.00.

Convenience Fees

Similar to order processing fees, a convenience fee is justified by most teams to cover the cost of making ticket purchases available 24 hours a day. Every team in MLB charges per ticket convenience fees when fans purchase their tickets online. While some teams (Red Sox and the White Sox) have flat convenience fees, most teams have variable convenience fees that increase with ticket price. The Tigers have the lowest convenience fee at \$1.00 and the Giants have the highest at \$26.25.

How the New York Teams Stack Up

New York Teams have some of the highest fees in the league. The Mets lead the league in average convenience fees and have the second highest order processing fee in league. Both the Yankees and the Mets lead the league in printing fees.

- **Order Processing Fee:** Yankees - \$3.30; Mets - \$5.00
- **Printing Fee:** Yankees & Mets - \$2.50
- **Convenience Fees:** Yankees range from \$3.60 to \$10.95; Mets range from \$4.00 to \$15.00.

Methodology

Rep. Weiner's office took the average of the order processing and printing fees for tickets that were available online. The convenience fee range is from the sampling of tickets available online.

Online Fees for Tickets are High and Arbitrary

The fees are largely inconsistent amongst the teams, the ticket prices and the ticket vendors. A fan sitting in a seat at one game may pay different fees for the same seat at a different game. For example, a Tampa Bay Fan sitting in the Upper Reserved Infield on a Wednesday night can pay different online fees sitting in the same seat on a Friday night. Fans buying tickets from the same online vendor, through the same website, can pay different order and printing fees depending on which team they are watching.

Online ticket fees are high

- Of the 30 major league baseball teams, 20 of them charge order fees of \$3.50 or more.
- Similarly, 21 teams charge \$2.50 or more for printing fees.

Online Fees are Arbitrary

- Tampa Bay fans buying a seat in the Upper Reserve Infield for a Wednesday night game pay \$10 for a seat and \$1.50 in convenience fees. The online fees for buying that ticket for a Friday game jump to \$3.00.
- Athletics fans buying a seat in the Plaza Infield one week pay \$35 for the ticket and \$5.50 in fees. The online fees for buying that same seat for a game two weeks later drop to \$5.25.

Teams Using the Same Ticket Service Can Charge Different Online Fees

- Event.com charges Mets fans a \$5 order fee and a \$6 convenience fee for a \$20 ticket, while Phillies fans buying tickets from Event.com only pay a \$4 order fee and a \$3.50 convenience fee for a \$20 ticket.
- Tickets.com charges Red Sox fans a \$7 order fee while Brewers fans aren't charged an order fee at all when purchasing on Tickets.com.
- Likewise, Yankees fans must use Ticketmaster to purchase tickets and are charged \$3.30, while Braves fans are charged \$2.10 as an order fee.

How the New York Teams Stack Up

The Yankees and the Mets are no exception for high and arbitrary ticket fees. Convenience fees should be flat and reasonable or a lower percentage of the ticket price, but this is not true for the Yankees or the Mets.

- Examples of high fees include Yankee fans buying \$22 and \$48 tickets and having to pay the same 5.70 convenience fee, and Mets fans buying \$ 21 and \$45 tickets and having to pay the same \$6.00 convenience fee.
- An example of arbitrary ticket fees is when a Mets fan buys a seat in the Field Box for a Saturday game paying \$120 for a seat and \$10 in convenience fees. The online fees for buying that same seat for a Friday game three weeks later will drop to \$8.00.

Methodology

Ticket prices and fees were collected from every MLB team website for upcoming games. Analysis was performed by Congressman Weiner's office.

Bleacher Bums Pay the Most in Online Fees

It doesn't seem fair or logical, but the fans that buy the cheapest tickets pay the highest fees as a percentage of the ticket price. Since the printing and order processing fees don't vary with ticket price, the fans sitting in the bleachers pay the same fees as their counterparts in the luxury boxes. Convenience fees also hit the bleacher bums the hardest, since the convenience fees for most teams don't increase proportionally with ticket prices. Major League Baseball should either charge a flat fee or a percentage, but not penalize fans buying cheap tickets with high fees.

Highlights

Team	Ticket Price	Total Fees	Markup Percent
Athletics	\$2.00	\$8.25	413%
Rockies	\$4.00	\$8.00	200%
Braves	\$4.00	\$7.85	196%
Yankees	\$5.00	\$9.40	188%
Mets	\$11.00	\$11.50	105%
Phillies	\$17.00	\$9.50	56%

How the New York Teams Stack Up

A Yankee fan buying a \$5 ticket will pay up to \$9.40 in ticket fees if they order their ticket online and print it at home, which is a 188% markup in the ticket price. A Yankee fan in \$300 seats can pay up to \$16.75 in fees, which is only a 5.5% markup of the ticket price. Mets fans in \$11 seats fair a little better with up to \$11.50 in fees, which is a 105% markup.

Methodology

Rep. Weiner's office analyzed tickets that were available online. The cheapest ticket and online fees were analyzed.

Buy Tickets for Your Family Online and It Adds Up

Most fees were not per order but per ticket, so when a family buys tickets they pay more in online fees. A family of four attending a Mets game can pay up to \$31.50 in online fees. A Yankees family can pay up to \$28.60 in online fees.

Highlights

- A family of four at an Angel's game in \$20 seats can pay up to \$30.75 in fees on top of the \$80 they have to spend for their tickets.
- A family of four at a Mets game in \$21 seats can pay up to \$31.50 in fees on top of the \$84 they have to spend for their tickets.
- A family of four at a Dodgers game in \$20 seats can pay up to \$26.85 in fees on top of the \$80 they have to spend for their tickets.

Fees for a Family of Four

Team	Ticket Price	Total Fees	Markup Percent	Team Rank by Percent
Angels	\$20.00	\$30.75	38%	1
Mets	\$21.00	\$31.50	38%	2
Dodgers	\$20.00	\$26.85	34%	3
Red Sox	\$20.00	\$26.50	33%	4
Yankees	\$22.00	\$28.60	33%	5
Diamondbacks	\$25.00	\$17.17	20%	30

How the New York Teams Stacked Up

Yankee and Mets families are some of the hardest hit families in MLB. A Mets family of four, buying tickets online from venue.com, sitting in \$21 seats can end up paying an additional \$31.50 in fees, which includes a \$5 order processing fee, a \$2.50 printing fee, and \$24 in convenience fees. A Yankee family of four, buying tickets online from Ticketmaster, sitting in \$22 seats can end up paying an additional \$28.60 in fees, which includes a \$3.30 order processing fee, a \$2.50 printing fee, and a \$22.80 in convenience fees.

Methodology

Rep. Weiner's office analyzed tickets that were available online. Tickets in the range of \$20 to \$25 were used to compare how fees were adding up for families across MLB. The average ticket price for MLB is \$26.74.

Weiner Proposal

Major League Baseball teams are charging fans arbitrary and excessive fees when buying tickets online. Sometimes these fees can be greater than the ticket price. When fans buy tickets online, they don't know what the final price of the ticket when they pick their seats. Online ticket vendors add extra fees at every step of the process. Virtually every time a fan clicks next, another fee is added. The first fees fans get hit with are convenience fees, which appear after they make their ticket selection. Then a printing fee gets added for fans that want to print their tickets at home. Then the final hit comes with the order processing fee just before the fan clicks to purchase the tickets.

Solution

To add greater transparency to baseball ticket fees, Rep. Weiner, who sits on the Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection intends to propose legislation requiring all websites selling baseball tickets to display at the beginning of the ticket purchase the total amount of fees as a percent of the ticket price.